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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN'S NEW
YEAR'S DAY SPEECH

1. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taiwan dailies shifted their focus of coverage to President Chen Shui-bian's New Year's Day address again January 11 following National Security Council Secretary-General Chiou I-jen's press conference Tuesday. At the press conference, Chiou refuted a news story that ran Monday that said Chen submitted his New Year's Day speech to the United States for review before he delivered it and was asked to revise it three times. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" reported Chiou as saying that one thing Chen did not talk about in his New Year's Day address was China attempts to solve the Taiwan issue [by the use of force] by 2020. "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran a banner headline on its front page that read: "China Attempts to Resolve Taiwan [Issue] in 2020."

The pro-unification "United Daily News," on the other hand, ran an exclusive interview with an unnamed senior Bush administration official on its front page with the headline: "Taiwan Guarantees to the United States That the Four No's Pledge Remains Unchanged." The sub-headline added: "United States Expresses Concern about [Chen's] New Year's Day Address. U.S. Official Says During an Interview with This Newspaper That [Washington] Will Wait and See Taipei's Action." [Washington] Is Concerned about the Referendum on a New Constitution and Proactive Management of Cross-Strait Economics and Trade." The newspaper also carried the entire contents of the interview with the U.S. official on its page two and page thirteen, which were topped with two separate headlines: "U.S. Official [on Bian's New Year's Day Address: [Washington] Hopes Taiwan Is Predictable and Stable," and "U.S. Official: [Washington] Hopes Taiwan Will Use [Its] Action to Prove the Four No's Pledge."

2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" editorial strongly criticized KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou for advocating reunification with China, and criticized some DPP members for calling for "confident opening up" with China. An editorial in the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" also lashed at the pro-China media outlets for using Chen's New Year's Day address to sow discord between Taiwan and the United States. "United Daily News" Washington correspondent Vincent Chang, however, directly questioned in a commentary if Chen will acknowledge his "Four No's" pledge in light of the unnamed senior U.S. official's remarks. Chang said Chen's reaction and response "will directly affect Washington's judgment of Chen's 'sincerity,'" and "the aftermath of such an impact will most likely reflect in the meeting between President George W. Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao during the latter's visit to Washington this coming spring." A news analysis in the centrist "China Times" also pointed out directly that Chen wants to throw the "hot potato" of cross-strait impasse back to Washington. A "China Times" editorial also strongly demanded that Chen clarify two major issues relating to his plan to launch a "referendum on a new constitution," saying that serious national issues cannot simply be decided by Chen's New Year's Day address alone. End summary.

A) "Who Are the People That Still Fail to Find Their Way?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (1/11):

"President Chen said in his recent New Year's Day speech that he will adopt 'proactive management, effective opening' as a new theme for the new way of thinking and policy in terms of cross-strait trade. While everyone in the country feels happy for Chen that he is able to step out of the mire created by the previous 'proactive opening' [policy], some DPP members have cried out that 'Taiwan must find a correct position for itself,' making no attempt to conceal that they are standing on the opposite side of President A-Bian. .

"The DPP is already full of self-contradictions as it talks about Taiwan's westbound [policy] and economic integration with China, [a country] which is aiming some 800 missiles at Taiwan on the one hand, while advocating the writing of a new constitution for the island, rectifying Taiwan's name

and 'one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait.' The party is basically illogical and will eventually lose people's trust in the long term. The DPP, in fact, suffered the consequences of its own actions when it was defeated in the legislators' election [in 2004] and the 3-in-1 mayoral and magistrate elections [in 2005]. We really doubt if those who embrace the 'westbound' policy and [call for] 'Taiwan's positioning' have learned a 'correct' lesson from the DPP's setbacks .

"Wake up, Mr. President,' is a famous line said by a political party chairman who advocates 're-unification' [with China]. The President is wide-awake now and has located Taiwan's correct position. It is those who continue to be 'intoxicated by the Chinese market,' including the party chairman who asserts 'reunification' [with China] and the green supporters who brag about '[Taiwan's] confident opening-up' and who plan to organize a 'society on cross-strait politics and economics,' that remain dead-drunk."

B) "Pro-China Media Outlets Sow Discord between Taiwan and the United States; Chiou I-jen's Immediate Clarification Lays Bare the Untrue Rumors"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 10,000] asserted (1/11):

". In terms of the call for a 'referendum on a new constitution,' the private sector [in Taiwan] has in reality been pushing for 'the movement for rectifying [Taiwan's] name and writing a new constitution' for a long time . [We] can say that the 'referendum on a new constitution' is a down-to-up and out-to-in action pushed by the private sector; its success depends on the wisdom and perseverance of the [Taiwan] people. The United States is a democratic country which has undergone constitutional amendments many times. Washington thus has no reason to oppose Taiwan's constitutional re-engineering plan. The pan-Blue camp's efforts in lobbying the U.S. State Department and Congress and working in line with China's propaganda in the international community [to deter Taiwan's constitutional reform plan] may affect the U.S. position for a while. But as long as we steady our footing, continue to strengthen communication and explain [to Washington] our policy, we are sure we can change Washington's views. ."

C) "The United States Puts the 'Four No's' [Pledge] back [into Taiwan's Hands] Again; Will [Chen Shui-bian] Acknowledge It?"

Washington correspondent Vincent Chang noted in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (1/11):

"President Chen Shui-bian, in the wake of [the DPP's] severe defeat in [last December's] mayoral and magistrate elections, chose to re-embark on his journey by embracing the deep-green fundamental tenets. One of his most significant moves was the attempt to get rid of the 'Five No's' pledge, the self-restricted 'Incantation of the Golden Hoop' as regarded by the pro-independence activists, via his New Year's Day address, whose entire text emphasizes nothing but the Taiwan-centered values.

"However, since President Chen has been throwing out topics such as 'one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait' and [the launching of] 'a referendum on a new constitution' over the past five years, which caused Washington to raise its eyebrows, the 'Five No's' (or 'Four No's' in the eyes of the United States) pledge has become the final framework the United States wields to bring and lock Chen, who has been wandering along the 'red line' borders of Washington's cross-strait policy, back to his own pledge. The 'Four No's' pledge has become the unbearable heaviness of being for Chen.

"National Security Council Secretary-General Chiou I-jen admitted Tuesday that Taipei and Washington had communicated 'intensely' over the contents of [Chen's] New Year's Day address. Chiou also mentioned that Washington did show concerns about the contents [of the speech], especially the two parts with regard to the 'referendum on a new constitution' and 'cross-strait economics and trade.' But what Chiou failed to mention was that the United States was also concerned about [Chen's] highlight of the Taiwan-centered values in his speech and subtle details with regard to [Chen's] interaction with KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou. .

"In addition, [Chen's] New Year's Day address has skillfully dodged mentioning his 'previous pledges,' including the 'Four No's,' and the Presidential Office used the statement of '[Taiwan's] policy remains unchanged' afterwards to vaguely sum up everything. .

"As for which policy remains unchanged? The Chen Shui-bian administration gave pretty ambiguous clarification. The

question regarding whether the 'Four No's' pledge concerned by the United States will take this opportunity and 'fade out' henceforth has also become a focus of attention. .

"It is noteworthy that the [U.S.] official, [during his interview with this correspondent,] regarded all the pledges Chen has made previously, including the 'Four No's' pledge, as part of those 'unchanged policies' that Taiwan has guaranteed to Washington.

"With regard to questions about how Chen will respond and react [to Washington], and whether or not he will acknowledge the 'Four No's' pledge that Washington has insisted on putting back into his mouth will directly affect Washington's judgment of Chen's 'sincerity.' The aftermath of such an impact will most likely reflect in the meeting between President George W. Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao during the latter's visit to Washington this coming spring."

D) "Bian Hardens [His Attitude], Throwing the Hot Potato Back to the United States"

Journalist Lin Shu-ling said in a news analysis in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (1/11):

"No matter how strong the United States' concern about Chen Shui-bian's New Year's Day address is, it is a fact that Washington has doubts about Taiwan's future direction with regard to cross-Straits relations. But one cannot rule out the possibility that this is exactly one of the strategies Chen would use to harden his attitude towards Beijing.

"Chen has lately made a drastic change with regard to his dove-like cross-Straits policy over the past five years by saying no to China directly, throwing out a bomb to the international community. Why did he want to do that? What was his policy-making pattern? All these questions aroused people's curiosity. But many signs recently showed that the thinking behind Chen's New Year's Day address seemed to have resembled the trilogy of 'conflicts, compromise, and progress' that he constantly adopts. His first step was to clarify whose responsibility it is for the stalemated cross-Straits relations, bringing it to Washington's attention that it is Beijing that has pushed Taiwan into a corner that the island cannot even extend any of its goodwill. .

"Bian's attitude, on the one hand, was meant to show to the pan-Green camp that he was not as inconsistent as [former President] Lee Teng-hui claimed him to be, so that he could secure [the support] of the green fundamentalists for him as early as possible. On the other hand, Chen [is aware that] only when he continues to harden [his attitude] can he make the United States realize how serious the situation has become. The pressure placed on Taipei [by Washington] can thus be shifted to Beijing so that Chen can have a chance to break away from his own predicament.

"Without doubt, the premise behind such a move by Chen was the belief that Beijing will not rashly adopt any irrational action at the current stage. Neither will Chen really step over the red line; there is a legal threshold for the 'referendum on a new constitution' as a safety valve. As a result, it is expected that Chen will continue hardening his attitude in order to seek to create a favorable position for himself before he gets any 'answer' [from Washington]."

E) "The Ruling Party Should Clearly Clarify [Its Stand on] the New Constitution and Rectification of Taiwan's Name"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (1/11):

"President A-Bian announced in his New Year's Day address that he will launch a referendum on a new constitution in 2007. He has set the timeline but failed to clarify two major questions. One question is whether the referendum on a new constitution will be processed in accordance with the constitutional amendment procedures regulated by the [government's] existing constitution or [the new constitution] will be put under a referendum? The other question is whether the title of the country referred to in the new constitution that will be put under a referendum will be the Republic of China or Taiwan?

"As a ROC president who is supposed to obey the ROC Constitution, A-Bian should not have any options about launching a new constitution because the [ROC] Constitution does not allow the president to use ambiguous political rhetoric such as 'a referendum on a new constitution' to cover up the major gap between writing a new constitution and amending the constitution. As a state leader who is in charge of Taiwan's safety as a whole, constitutional ethics naturally does not allow A-Bian to keep it as a top secret as to the island's national title, which is evidently

closely related to the cross-Strait relations and [our] national security. For Taiwan, a country that honors [and implements] democracy, matters of such grave importance must not be decided simply by a speech of the president. Wouldn't it be like what a totalitarian country will do if serious issues such as writing a new constitution and amending the constitution simply be decided by the president alone? ."

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